

The Republican.

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A LETTER TO SIR ROBERT GIFFORD,

His Majesty's Attorney-General,

On the Mock Trial of the Editor in the Court of King's Bench on the 12th, 13th, and 14th of October.

King's Bench Prison, October 27, 1819.

SIR,

IN addressing you in your official character as Attorney-General of England, I shall be under the necessity in this letter of bringing forward many instances of private conduct and character, which under any other circumstances than those in which I stand related to you, might fairly be considered neither generous nor manly. But when a man who has been the avowed advocate of Deistical opinions, and the most extended Political liberty, even to Republicanism—when such has been the open and determined avowal of such opinions, that others, meaning equally as well, and approaching near to those opinions, are compelled to shun him as violent in disposition, and in the necessary proposed measures to attain the object in view, I say when such a man as this can sacrifice his favourite, and sternly defended opinions to the shrine of Despotism and Corruption, for the paltry emolument of the moment, and acquiesce in all, and become the instrument in every act of oppression and persecution emanating from Despotism and Corruption, even to a profession of acting *conscientiously* in the discharge of what he calls a duty. I say, when we find such a man as this, we hesitate not to pronounce him an apostate to his faith, a Renegade to principle, a traitor to his former conviction of truth, a dissembler in practice, and a hypocrite in reality, “possessing only a base desire for filthy lucre.” Such a man is *Sir Robert Gifford, Knt. His Sacred Majesty's Attorney-General!* The consequent to this assertion should be a narrative of corroborating circumstances: to this I shall now proceed.

I ventured and repeated the assertion during my *mock trial*, that you, Sir Robert, had openly avowed yourself a

R. Carlile, Printer, 55, Fleet Street, London.

Deist prior to your elevation as a Law-Officer of the Crown. I say a Deist, because the Unitarian, as opposed to the Trinitarian, is a Deist, believing in one God, in opposition to those who believe in three Gods or more, for it is vain for the Trinitarian to speak of his triune God, or, as Bishop Patrick attempted to convince his hearers of this doctrine, by exhibiting to their view a blade of three-leaved grass, when in the next breath they represent God the Son sitting at the right hand of God the Father, on a distinct throne, and God the Holy Ghost waiting to dispatch their orders and messages, or to fill with the Holy Spirit such of the human race as the whims and caprice of God the Father and God the Son might suggest. I am aware, Sir Robert, that these expressions will shock the minds of the unreflecting Trinitarians, and make them exclaim, "A horrid blasphemy!" but I, the writer, and you, the person addressed, being believers in one God only, can smile at such absurdities, however offensive they may be to the minds of others.

I think, Sir Robert, it must be admitted, that a Unitarian is a Deist, in the same sense as the followers of Confucius are Deists; and taking this for granted, and that you are a Deist, though now hypocritically disguised, which I think I can make plainly appear from the following circumstances:

First, That during your residence in Exeter, you, with all your family, were regular attendants at the Unitarian Chapel, in Southgate Street, and that you supported it by your subscription.

Secondly, That it was at the moment you were elevated to the Solicitor-Generalship, that you quitted the Unitarians in London and sent your family to the Established Church.

Thirdly, That you actually continued your annual subscription to the Unitarian Charity School in Exeter, and that it was since your appointment to the Attorney-Generalship that you sent £20 to that institution, requesting the Secretary to erase your name as an annual subscriber.

The last, And I expect to you the most impressive circumstance, is, that you paid your addresses to a young lady of fortune, and that the only objection to you on the part of the lady's friends was that you held deistical opinions or opinions in opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity.

A gentleman from the West of England, offered to attest this fact as evidence in the Court, had my defence not been interrupted and suppressed by a coalition. A gentleman, that was and is quite a stranger to me, but who is willing to prove the assertion should it ever become necessary.

It was from a knowledge of these circumstances that induced me to say, "that whatever might be the professions of the Attorney-General, I might give the hand of fellowship to Sir Robert Gifford." It was this expression that drew from you the affected assertion, "that you did not know whether the Defendant merited your contempt or your pity; but that you felt disposed to grant him your pity." That Defendant neither values your contempt, nor wishes for your pity; he is impressed with gratitude for the benefit he has received, and the importance you and your predecessor Sir Samuel Shepherd have elevated him to; an elevation from which he smiles at you, and dares your grasp to withdraw him.

At present, Sir Robert, I feel myself beyond your reach, and I cannot better elucidate this proposition than by recording an anecdote which happened in the front of my shop in Fleet-street during the last week. A well-dressed man was mixed with the crowd before the window and gave vent to his feelings as follows. "Ah! Paine is now in hell, and Carlile will soon follow him." A shrewder man, but not so well dressed, immediately retorted, "not quite so soon, you will find Carlile like a cabbage, if you take off his head there will be a hundred sprouts from him." As I shall have the pleasure at least of another combat with you in Westminster Hall, I shall abstain from any further observations here, but hope whatever opinions the Attorney-General may find it necessary to assume, that Sir Robert Gifford will again leave that office a Deist, or if you please a Unitarian.

Your's gratefully,

RICHARD CARLILE.

The **MOCK TRIALS** of Mr. CARLILE are now publishing in Sheets, at 2d. each, Three Sheets are ready for delivery, the Whole will make about Forty Sheets, and the Publication will proceed as rapidly as possible.

Just published, A faithful Representation of the Attack of the **MANCHESTER CAVALRY**, on the Inhabitants of that Town and its Vicinity. This Print is on a large Royal Sheet, executed under the direction of Mr. CARLILE, who was present on the Hustings, and represents the most forcible Part of the **MASSACRE**, when the Cavalry had nearly approached the Hustings. Price plain, 6s. Coloured 10s. 6d.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DR. RUDGE AND MR. CARLILE.

On the Subject of his Mock TRIALS and the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

DR. RUDGE TO MR. CARLILE.

Dr. RUDGE trusts that Mr. Carlile will disapprove neither of the motives by which the present letter has been dictated, nor of the temper in which it has been written.

From the account of the late trial for the re-publication of the "Age of Reason," Mr. Carlile is reported to have said, in the course of his defence, that to the views and sentiments, promulgated in that work, he fully subscribed.

Remote from the mind of Dr. Rudge is the intention of offering the slightest personal offence to any man: and he, therefore, sincerely hopes he shall not be thought to mean any thing disrespectful to Mr. Carlile, if he ventures to ask, whether this is the deliberate conviction of his mind, to which he has been brought by a calm and patient, a deep, and conscientious study of the Holy Scriptures, whether he has collated with care, and compared with judgment the different parts and passages of the sacred volume, and whether, in this investigation, which has had truth for its only object, he has at all times consulted the best authorities, and has availed himself of the labours and views which the most enlightened and least prejudiced of the children of men have taken of such subjects, and exercised in such pursuits? What, for instance, has been the result of the cool and dispassionate enquiries of such men as Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Locke, Sir William Jones, and others of the same order of intellect, of the same mental calibre, and of the same profound and cautious habits of inquiry and reflection? Of these masters in Israel, it is surely no reproach to any man to acknowledge that he was once the scholar—it is putting no restraint upon the natural liberty and free agency of any man to say—"Well: it has been by such men, that I have been taught how to employ my reason, and exercise my judgment—how to reason aright of this, and how to judge well of that subject—how to distinguish right from wrong, and how to separate from truth the dross of falsehood and error."

Before any deliberate opinion be formed and expressed of the Holy Scriptures, the above course should be adopted: and unless it has been observed, in an amiable temper of mind, and with a disposition only to investigate and attain the truth, as it is in God, and in the revelation of his word, the competency of any man to be a judge of such matters, may fairly and honestly be questioned. Dr. Rudge hopes, therefore, that he may, without offence, submit these suggestions to Mr. Carlile's calm and private consideration, and offer this advice, that with the temper and disposition to which Dr. Rudge has above alluded, he would sit down and read Dr.

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Lardner's great work, "the Credibility of the Gospel History," and also Dr. Paley's "Evidences of Christianity," works, which Dr. Rudge more particularly recommends as having more perhaps than other theological publications he has read in the course of his studies, produced conviction in his mind, and faith "in the truth as it is in Jesus."

Limehouse, Oct. 18, 1819.

R. CARLILE TO DR. RUDGE.

R. CARLILE begs to assure Dr. Rudge that he approves both of the motive and the temper of his letter as far as its internal evidence speaks.

Agreeable to the report of his *interrupted defence*, he hesitates not to say that he fully subscribes to the views and sentiments promulgated in the Theological Works of Mr. Paine, with the exception he made in the course of his *mock trial*, namely, his dissent from "Paine's Private Thoughts on a Future State."

In answer to the inquiry of Dr. Rudge whether this is the deliberate conviction of his mind after a calm and patient, a deep and conscientious study of the *Holy Scriptures*, after a careful and judicious comparison of different parts and passages of the *sacred volume*, and after consulting the best authorities such as Sir Isaac Newton, Locke, and Sir William Jones, he begs to assure Dr. Rudge with all the sincerity with which man can commune with his fellow, that his conviction is the result—first, of a calm and conscientious examination of the book alluded to, with a comparison of all its supposed bearings and connections;—and secondly of a consultation of all those authorities which Dr. Rudge alleges to be as many proofs of the contrary. When he enquires after the writings of Sir Isaac Newton, and finds that those which were the productions of the most vigorous part of his life were purely deistical, and actually kept from the public view at the Earl of Portsmouth's house, and are not to be seen without the consent of the Bishop of London, a guardian to the Earl in consequence of his imbecility, he cannot be content to take as the real sentiments of Sir Isaac Newton, the few observations and essays he made to explain that which is called prophecy and revelation in the book called the Bible, at a time when his faculties might fairly be presumed to have been impaired. Again, when he finds that Locke was actually expelled from the University of Oxford for his Anti-Christian principles and tenets, he cannot consent to consider Locke as a genuine authority in defence of Christianity, merely because in a few instances he spoke favourably of its moral effect and influence on mankind, perhaps to conciliate some friend, and to lessen the calumny and prejudice which we know to have existed against him, equal even to that that has been attempted to be raised against R. Carlile himself.

R. C. has been informed that the statute the 9th and 10th of Wil-

ham and Mary, entitled "An act for the more effectually suppressing Blasphemy and Prophaneness," was actually aimed at Locke, and intended to put a stop to the progress and effect of his writings, which he thinks, with the exception before made, were strictly and purely of a Deistical tendency. With respect to Sir William Jones, R. Carlile is not aware of any other authority or defence of the Bible and Christian religion he has left us, save the manuscript sentence left in the leaf of his own Bible, which he believes to have been to this effect—that independent of its divinity, it contained a code of morals of the purest nature and not to be exceeded in any other work. R. Carlile agrees with Sir William Jones so far, but when it is insisted on as a Revelation from God, and the voice of God speaking to man, R. Carlile has, as well as the moral, examined the immoral part, and finds it inconsistent with his ideas of the Deity. R. Carlile presumes he need not quote any passages to support this opinion, but is inclined to think that Dr. Rudge will not deny that there are any immoral parts in the book. R. Carlile has never read either Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*, nor Dr. Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*, neither has Dr. Rudge intimated to R. Carlile whether he has ever read the *Theological Writings of Paine*. He therefore begs Dr. Rudge to favour him with the acceptance of a copy, and also, if agreeable, in return with the loan of those two *Evidences of Christianity*, as from the peculiar situation of R. Carlile, and the expence he has been exposed to, he cannot afford to purchase them. R. Carlile pledges the strictest care and integrity in returning them, and would wish an interchange of opinion, Dr. Rudge on the *Works of Paine*, and R. Carlile on the *Evidences of Christianity*, at any given period. R. Carlile hopes that should an interchange of opinions on the hostile works be consented to on the part of Dr. Rudge, that the mere sonorous expressions of "Holy Scriptures," "Sacred Volume,"—"Masters in Israel,"—"The truth, as it is in God and in the Revelation of his Word,"—"and faith in the truth, as it is in Jesus" are not to be taken or given as admissions as necessary to "separate from truth the dross of falsehood and errors" in the light in which Dr. Rudge has addressed his

Humble Servant,

R. CARLILE.

King's Bench Prison,
Wednesday Evening, Oct. 20, 1819.

P. S. R. C. had closed his answer to Dr. Rudge last evening, and considered all the queries satisfactorily answered, but on reading the *Morning Chronicle* of this morning, he finds a letter, which he considers to be a case in point, on which R. C. wishes to make a few observations, although he fears they will lead him into much more matter of dispute than was first intended to have been introduced in this answer, R. C. having much on his mind at this moment, which he is anxious to give vent to, and trusts to

the patience of Dr. Rudge to read and judge of it. The letter alluded to is addressed to the Editor, and signed R. J. and refers to the opinions of Sir William Jones as relates to the Bible and the person of Jesus. Sir William is, by an extract from his *Life and Letters*, (mark, Sir, his *Life and Letters* which, at least, are but second-hand to us) made to say, "I, who cannot help believing the divinity of the Messiah, from the undisputed antiquity and manifest completion of many prophecies, especially those of Isaiah, in the only person recorded by history, to whom they are applicable, am obliged, of course, to believe the sanctity of the venerable books, to which that sacred person refers as genuine: but it is not the truth of our national religion, as such, that I have at heart—it is truth itself."

What must be the importance of a book, of which it may be truly said, "If the book is not true, the religion which we profess is false!"

"No person in the history of the Jews, before or after Jesus, coincides with their account, except Jesus: therefore, Jesus was the subject of their writings, which are consequently inspired, and he a person of an extraordinary nature—he is the Messiah. If this be just reasoning, we may believe his miracles, and must obey his law." R. C. will not here attempt, by references or quotations, to refute the first and third paragraphs, but would refer Dr. Rudge to the Third Part of the Age of Reason, where it has an ample and complete refutation, and where he thinks Dr. Rudge will find that the reasoning attributed to, but which R. C. cannot believe to be Sir William Jones's, (when he knows how easy it is for a dishonest Editor to interpolate) is not just, and consequently we are not called on to believe the miracles, or to obey any other law than that which is consistent with the law of Nature, as verified in the moral welfare of mankind.

With respect to the second paragraph, R. C. is impressed with the importance of the book called the Bible, in its too general acceptance, but strip it of its veil of mystery, and its imaginary divinity, and the greater portion of that book, when read as another book is read, will be found to merit only the contempt of mankind. Admitting that the three paragraphs quoted as above to have been the sentiments of Sir William Jones (which, under my admiration of the general character of that great man, I cannot believe to be his) the assertion is very weak, the reasoning the most lame and inconclusive that R. C. ever met with, and were evidently (if true) the production of an impaired mind. If a further proof of this assertion be necessary, we have it in another paragraph, quoted from the same publication, namely, his *Life and Letters*, which, R. C. presumes were edited after his death, it as follows:—"If difficulties occur, and we are asked, 'How can they be solved?' we may safely say, 'We do not know,' yet we may truly be, and justly called, Christians." Shade of Sir William Jones! could such sophistry and delusion as this have ever contaminated that lustre which was wont to accompany thy name and

writings? No! I will not give credence to it—it must have been the sentiment of some dishonest Editor palmed on thy mind, as a stain to thy undeviating brilliance and rectitude.

But R. C. wishes to set aside all fiction and imagination, and to reason on the known and generally admitted talents and principles of Sir Wm. Jones. He was the perfect mind, his political principles were opposed to the existing Government because he saw it founded in error and wickedness. That Government could not endure the attacks of so virtuous an opponent, and some means must be taken to get rid of them. Sir William was appointed (through fear and not through love) to the Chief Justiceship of one of the provinces in the East Indies; here a field was pointed out to him for research into the history and antiquity of that people; here that compound of all that was great and good, was absorbed in contemplating a mass of absurdity, and the benefits which his native country might have derived from his talents and integrity at home, were destroyed by the subtle influence of a wicked and corrupt Government. Accompanying this is the 9th No. of the Republican containing a Letter to Sir Charles Abbot, and to which only does R. C. wish to call Dr. Rudge's attention, as a fair exposition of the late conflict, the present situation of R. C., and the question at issue.

DR. RUDGE TO R. CARLILE.

Thursday, Oct. 21, 1819.

Dr. Rudge has sent his servant with Dr. Paley's "View of the Evidences of Christianity." He would have been as happy to have forwarded, at the same time, Dr. Lardner's "Credibility of the Gospel History," but he laments to say that it is a Work with which his library is not at present enriched. The copy of his works, which he read, belonged to the library of the College in Oxford, of which he was formerly a member; and beyond the voluminous extracts which he made at the time, he has none of the Doctor's works in his possession. Frequent references will be found in the "Evidences," which are in fact but an abstract and compilation from Dr. Lardner's great work, but rendered infinitely interesting, attractive, and original, even by the mode in which it has been done. Dr. Lardner's works comprise eleven or twelve octavo volumes, and are very expensive.

Dr. Rudge, in soliciting Mr. Carlile's attention to Dr. Paley's "View of the Evidences of Christianity," is actuated by the purest motives by which the conduct of one fellow-creature towards another can be influenced. He observes, that if truth be proposed as the only object of this investigation, and any pursuit without that object must be vain and worthless. The mind should be free and unbiassed, and Mr. Carlile should sit down to the inquiry with the temper and disposition suggested in Dr. Rudge's former letter: otherwise no good result, so far at least, as the interests of truth are concerned, can be expected. Now it is proba-

ble that some prejudice may have been imbibed; as indeed where is the individual without them? Dr. Rudge earnestly hopes, therefore, that they may be wholly removed, in this instance; and that the "Evidences" may be read and considered with a mind, not one avenue to which is closed against conviction by pre-conceived opinions, or past modes and habits of thinking. When thoroughly weighed and examined, Dr. Rudge will thank Mr. Carlile to return the two volumes, as they were given by a valued friend, and form part of a set of Dr. Paley's works.

One great source of prejudice, by which Dr. Rudge conceives that the free investigation of truth has been impeded, has arisen from some objectionable passages to be found in parts of the Scripture, particularly of the Old Testament, from which this inference has been drawn, that, because these *parts*, which refer especially to the history and abominations of the Jews, are exceptionable and offensive, in their record to decency and good morals, the *whole*, therefore, should be rejected as the Word of God! Now surely this is a very unfair and irrational way of treating the Scriptures, and would not be tolerated in the discussion of any other point, and the examination and adjustment of any other subject. Is Dr. Rudge's mind to be less sensible of the light and beauty of the sun, because some specks have been discovered in that glorious luminary? or, is he, therefore, to infer that, because they exist, it is not the workmanship of his God?

With respect to the opinions, said to have been avowed at one time, and contradicted at another, by Sir Isaac Newton and others, they affect not, or ought not to affect the inquiry into the truth of the Scriptures, whether they are, or are not the word of God. They only prove, supposing the account to be correct, the inconsistency, and hypocrisy of these great men; and should operate as a caution against another source of prejudice, from which few are exempt, that which arises from paying too great a deference and respect to the *dicta* of eminent and distinguished men. Man is but man in his best estate, and free, neither in the exercise of his intellect, nor in the conduct of his life, from a strange mixture of greatness, littleness on the one hand, and of rectitude and imbecility on the other.

Dr. Rudge has read the work of which Mr. C. has inclosed a copy, and for which he thanks him; but it is many years since. He is well acquainted with the writings of Deistical authors. The time was when he found reason to follow the course which he recommends Mr. Carlile to pursue. He examined and thought for himself. He read and weighed the objections of the infidel, and the answers of the believer. But, perhaps, more than any thing else, the character of Jesus, and the benevolent object of his mission, brought near to that conclusion, under the comfort and influence of which he is bound at all times to pray, that every one of his fellow creatures, was altogether such as he is in the measure of their faith; and that he evidenced himself to be in the rectitude of his conduct, and the consistency of his life,—a Christian,

Dr. R. has taken the liberty of enclosing a little work he published some time since, in which Mr. Carlile will observe how far his notions extend on the Trinity. A believer in the Mission of Jesus Christ cannot but be a believer in that doctrine, at least in the tenor in which it is there understood. Separated from the ambiguous and mystical terms in which it is obscured, it ceases to be that outrage on the reason of mankind, so often insisted on. Perhaps, after all, nothing could be more unhappy than the selection of the term, and which has engendered more strife than the doctrine itself. There is *one* God, his Son and prophet Jesus Christ, and the power of both dwelling in the hearts of the goodly the spirit—this is the only creed of the rational and wise, the Trinity in which they believe.

Limehouse, Oct. 25, 1819.

To the Editor of the REPUBLICAN.

SIR,

THERE are many people that suppose themselves Christians, merely by reading the Bible, and not having read any other book, and, through a mistake, have imbibed a prejudice against Deism. They think that a Deist is a monster out of human shape; they think he has no ideas of moral justice; they think a Deist can neither act, speak, nor feel like other men; they consider him an infidel and a character that ought not to be associated with; in short, they think a Deist cannot have a good qualification belonging to him.

If they would read and judge for themselves, and not be guided too much by the artifices of their designing priests, they will find by reading ancient history, that Deism is the most ancient religion.

Those nations which are falsely called heathens and idolaters, were all Deists; there never was a nation in the world that called themselves idolaters or heathens, it is only a name of reproach from the Jewish nations because they differed in their form of worshipping the Deity.

To support the truth of which, I will introduce some quotations from the ancients:—

“The celestial powers serve thee: hell itself is subservient to thee; the universe moves under thy hands; thou treadest Tartarus under thy feet; the stars answer to thy call, the seasons return at thy orders, the elements obey thee.”—*Egyptians.*

“Tread in the paths of Justice; adore the sole Master of the universe; he is one; to him all beings owe their existence; he acts in them, and by them, but has never been seen by mortal eyes.”—*Verses of Orpheus.*

“I am all that has been, all that is, and all that will be, and no mortal has drawn aside my veil.”—*Thebeans.*

“Immortal God, grant us the things thou think we stand in need of, and of which we are not unworthy.”

I could quote a great many more from the Chaldeans, Greeks,

&c., but this is sufficient to any candid and rational man to prove that men with such sublime notions could not address themselves to stocks and stones.

Deism is not only the most ancient religion, but it is the most universal at this present time. The vast empire of China, the most accomplished and the most virtuous empire in the world, are all Deists, the population of which is estimated at 333 millions of souls—the same that produced a Confucius, who has given the most sublime ideas of the Almighty which the human mind can conceive, without any pretensions to revelation.

There is not, nor cannot be, a religion, without calling in the aid of Deism. The Turks hold very exalted ideas of the Deity. Mahomet says, God holds his existence of himself, and by whom all others exist, who neither engenders nor is engendered, and to whom there is nothing that bears resemblance through the whole extent of being.

Even the Christian religion has Deism in it, notwithstanding their contempt for Deism. It must be allowed that the Christian religion has more Manism in it than any other, yet theirs is tempered with Deism in spite of all their prejudices.

Deism still goes on further, for the whole world is full of Deism, all nature is Deism, Deism extends itself further than the most sublime imaginations of the human mind can comprehend. Voltaire says the Deity has created millions of worlds, among which there is not one that resembles another, this immense variety is the effects of his immense power; there are not two leaves among the trees of the earth, nor two globes in the unlimited expanse of the Heavens, that are exactly similar, and all we see in this little atom in which we are born, ought to be considered in its proper place, according to the immutable decrees of him who comprehends all.

He also says in another place, God has placed before our eyes that book of truths, which if man would study—the truths he discovers are his own, he nourishes and exalts his soul, he lives in peace, and fears nothing from man.

Paine says that man cannot make principles, he can only discover them. Man cannot invent any thing that is eternal and immutable, and the scientific principles he employs for this purpose must and are of necessity as eternal and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move.

Thus it is evident that man cannot invent a machine, mill, engine, nor any thing else, without first of all submitting to pure and true Deism.

I don't know what the Christian world may say to this, when they find themselves involuntarily forced into Deism, they no doubt will feel themselves alarmed to think they are obliged to acknowledge what they have so long held in contempt; this shews the necessity of their reading for themselves, to become acquainted with that which they have so long been ignorant of.

Shoreditch. D. SHORT.

P. S. I would recommend the reading of a work of an Ancient History, from the beginning of time, there they will read of the drowning of an army in the sea like the Egyptians; also the sacrifice of a son like Abraham. They will also read of Herines, of whom Christ is a counterpart, and all this they will find was written centuries before Moses. It is not a work of one author, it is a compilation of different authors, not Rollin nor Mavor.

PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS ON GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION.—No. II.

Who first taught souls enslaved and realms undone

Th' enormous faith of many made for one?---

'Twas Superstition lent the Tyrant aid;

And gods of conquerors, slaves of subjects made.

ESSAY ON MAN.

In an age like the present, when mankind have made such immense advances in the path of science and philosophy, one is ashamed to see his country disgraced by such scenes of hypocrisy and villainy as those we have been witness to during the last two months. What, in the name of honour or humanity, could have induced Christians to assume such a fiendlike character as that they have exhibited to the world during the trial of Mr. Carlile! of a man whose private character none of the dastards dare impeach! Why have they laid aside the mild morality of Jesus, to assume that of Nero or Caligula? Can Christianity support its authority by no other means than fines and imprisonment? Cannot the Bishops enjoy their immense revenues, and permit a few philosophic spirits to communicate their ideas to each other in peace? Cannot the clergy revile and defame Zoroaster, Confucius, Mahomet, &c., without immuring those liberal minds in jails and dungeons who do not choose to be the authors of such calumnies? Cannot they tell the world that it is impossible a Society of Atheists should exist; but that nevertheless the literate, Mandarins, and Emperors of the Chinese, have always been Atheists, and nothing else, ever since the world began; without cutting the man's throat who is not able to assent to a contradiction so absurd? Cannot they make their followers believe that it is the duty of every good Christian to present them with the tenth of all he possesses, though himself, his wife and family, should perish through want; and that if he refuse to comply with their holy desire to possess his property, he and his wife and children will be damned to all eternity? Was the Society for the Suppression of Vice, instituted from motives of piety or policy? Did Jesus Christ recommend or command the institution of such a society? Did he ever counsel his disciples to be meek and gentle so long as they were without power, but to throw off the mask at once when they obtained it,

and to commence the most furious persecutions against every human being who should not be of their opinion?

Such, however, has been the case. For upwards of forty years the disciples of Jesus, half Jews, half Christians, were so humble or so insignificant, that they were utterly unknown to the world; and no historian prior to the time of Vespasian has deigned to make mention of them. Neither Josephus, nor Philo, have ever written a word about them; (for mankind are now convinced that the passage in Josephus which relates to Jesus is a palpable forgery:)—the reason is plain. None of the primitive Christians were remarkable for genius, riches, or power; the sect was formed of the dregs of the Jewish people; and speaking the same language, abstaining from the same meats, and frequently circumcised like them, they were constantly mistaken by the Romans for Jews. In fact, it is not to be wondered at, that the Romans in all the pride which conquest and glory inspires, should neglect to make themselves acquainted with the history or tenets of a sect, which took its rise among the rabble in one of the most obscure corners of their empire. Indeed, had they been so inclined, it was no easy task to discover what the tenets of the Christians were at the early period I am speaking of. Gnostics, Ebionites, Marcionites, Carpocratians, Valentinians, Cainites, &c. already divided the infant church, and reviled, libelled, lampooned, and anathematized each other with all the charity in the world.

But still they kept their hands from each other; and a seasonable persecution from the Emperors tended to unite the heterogeneous members of this divine religion. Not that we believe in half the persecutions the church has pretended to sustain, nor in half the number of martyrs which are said to have suffered for the faith. The good fathers of those days indulged themselves with romancing a little at times, when it suited their purposes, that is, when they wanted to impress their hearers or readers with a due horror for the established religion of the State; for you are to observe, that the primitive Christians constantly declaimed against the established religion of the country, till they had roused the indignation of the tolerant Pagans; and then charged the Emperors with cruelty and oppression.

This conduct of theirs sometimes drew upon them a real persecution; and there is no doubt but some of the more furious of their demagogues were hanged as an edifying example for the rest. But we do not once read of a Christian's being persecuted merely as such, that is, for holding those opinions which were *then* thought to constitute Christianity. I say *then*, because the opinions of the church have undergone some changes since the period we are speaking of.

In the year 303, the Emperor Galerius caused the cathedral church of Nicomedia, which the Christians had erected in front of the imperial palace, to be demolished. A Christian, whom we must acknowledge to have been at least imprudent, publicly tore

down the edict of the Emperor. The man was punished as he deserved. A few days afterwards the Emperor's palace was set on fire—the Christians were suspected. Still none of the sect were condemned to death: the edict simply ordered their temples to be destroyed, and that every Christian should be deprived of all civil and military honours.

This, to men who professed to despise all worldly distinctions, was no punishment at all—yet this is the most terrible persecution the church ever sustained. 'Tis true, we read of a Theban legion, which had been transported from Asia into Gaul, in order to suppress a rebellion which had been suppressed a whole year previous to that period, that were cut off to a man in passing the Alps, when their commander is represented to have stood in the utmost need of their services. But this massacre does not exactly agree with the assertion of Eusebius. "The profound peace and liberty which we enjoy," says he, "have caused us to fall into effeminacy and luxury." But the profound ignorance of the Christians, in the ages which succeeded, is sufficient apology for these ridiculous tales—it is no apology for their cruelties.

The moment Constantine, that compound of baseness, barbarity, and hypocrisy, ascended the throne, Christianity was publicly protected. 'Twas then, and then only, that the Christians appeared in their true character. The Pagans, Manicheans, and even their progenitors, the Jews, were persecuted with the most relentless cruelty; and the Roman empire, now become the theatre of theological controversy, exhibited such scenes of bloodshed and ferocity, that one may even doubt whether human nature could be capable of such excesses.

During the existence of the religion of Numa, no philosopher, with the exception of those driven out of Rome by Domitian, was ever persecuted for his opinions. Men always have, and always will entertain strange notions of a religion which must be supported by persecution. They will not be persuaded that it is divine, while its ministers or disciples deprive their fellow citizens of their liberty, because they entertain more worthy notions of the Deity than themselves. They will wish that the world still worshipped Jupiter and Minerva; since while they did so they were tolerant and humane. No bookseller, that we hear of, was ever imprisoned at Athens, or at Rome, for publishing the writings of Plato, or of Cicero; yet those philosophers laughed at the superstition of the People, and ridiculed their Gods. And in England, a country which prides itself upon its liberal notions on religion, where men are told to their faces that they are free, where Christianity and free toleration are daily preached, a bookseller, has been arrested, tried, and condemned to I know not how many years imprisonment, for printing and publishing a work purely philosophical. I hope he will not be assassinated in prison! Superstition has had its martyrs; I fear philosophy is about to be honoured with a few. But, oh! how callous must be the hearts of

those men, who could coolly condemn their fellow citizen to a dungeon, because he is not of the same faith as them! Because he has attempted to emancipate the human mind from the tyranny of opinion, and dared to assert that every citizen ought to judge for himself in matters of faith.

But has Carlile been sacrificed to religious prejudices, or to despotism? Is he the victim of his zeal for philosophy, or for the cause of Freedom? Ought his name to be more dear to the philosopher, or to the patriot? These are questions which admit of some discussion.

If the Society for the Suppression of Vice be not a mass of hypocrites, their motive for prosecuting Carlile must be a religious one; they must wish to put down by force those opinions which they suppose are inimical to Christianity; but this is a tacit confession that they fear to have their religion examined; that they suppose it will not stand the test. But if this society, which seems to merit the appellation of the British Inquisition, be nothing more than the tool of a faction, by which it wishes to crush the free spirit of inquiry, then Carlile may be said to be imprisoned for his patriotism. And it is more than probable, that when the English nation shall attain that liberty, with the shadow of which it has so long been amused, it will gather up the ashes of this patriot, inclose them in an urn of gold, and shed many a tear over the spot where they are laid.

Surely the friends of Freedom will not think these pages which are consecrated to a virtuous and unfortunate individual, unworthy their attention; especially as it is now the "goût" of all the hireling journalists to rail at, and abuse him.

P. S. We do not usually give ourselves the trouble to peruse all the "betises" with which the rabble of scribblers inundate the town; the man who can find no better employment must have an understanding contemptible as their own; but having taken "Bell's Weekly Messenger" into our hand, by mere chance, our attention was attracted by its more than ordinary stupidity and ignorance. In a part of it, which the Editor has ludicrously styled "The Politics of Europe," the Editor has undertaken to defend the Bible, at the expence of humanity and common sense. In the first few lines our pious Editor, instead of entertaining us with "the Politics of Europe," has thought fit to libel Mr. Carlile, and to call him an "ignorant and unhappy man."

After hearing Mr. Bell assert, "that the Bible was written at least 1,200 years before any other book or record," let the reader judge whether he or Mr. Carlile be the most ignorant. Has the pious and learned editor never read of Sanconiathan, the Zendavesta, or the Veidam, more ancient than Moses? or of the Shasta, still more ancient? Does he mean to say that Moses lived 1,200 years before Homer and Orpheus? or, if he really is so ignorant, can he hope to impose upon the good sense of the English nation by such "sottises?" But ignorance is ever presuming.

But let us hear the opinions of the writers of a Public Journal, of a man, too, who presumes to make those opinions public, in the nineteenth century, on the nature of the human soul, and on the relative duties of man. "But let us remember, that we all hold our lives only as the gift of God, and that we have no claim whatever in right to them,—that he made us for his own service and honour, and through those means, for our own ultimate happiness; and that when we abuse these gifts (the gifts of life,) and degrade and brutify (observe the eloquence of the language) the divine image in our bodies (Mr. Editor Bell believes our bodies to be the image of God's body) and souls, our own reason, a thing of the same general nature with the Divine mind itself, teaches us that there is no inconsistency with the attributes of such a Being, that he should cut us off; or, if we use the figurative language of the Holy Scriptures, that he should repent that he had made man, when they had become so abominable in his sight." Let us divest these sentiments of Mr. Editor Bell's eloquence, and see how they will look in plain English. "Let us remember, my dear brethren, that we did not make ourselves; and that if we had never been born we could not in justice grumble at God for not making us—he made us for his own honour and service; (and consequently we are not at all obliged to him) but if nevertheless we dare to enjoy life in our own way, he will certainly send us to the Devil—that is, if we brutify our bodies, which are the image of God's body, and our souls, which are undoubtedly the image of God's soul. Nay, more than that, my dear brethren, you are to know that our reason, our own dear reason, (which it is nevertheless the height of impiety to listen to) is exactly of the same nature with the Deity itself—(a vile scribbler of the same nature with God! 'O Tempora, O Mores!') All this premised, still it is no way inconsistent with the character of the Divine Being, to cut us off, who are of the same nature with himself, and to be quite savage with himself that he had made so vile an animal as man!"

If this vile cant is not the height of impiety and ignorance, I am totally unable to comprehend what is. How long will this man continue to tell us that the Bible is the most ancient book in the world by 1,200 years! How long will he declaim about the immortal fruits and flowers of Aaron's rod, which are long since dead! How long will he pester the world with the metamorphosis of an Egyptian Magus's rod into a serpent! We would be obliged to him if he could tell us where he learned to call the Egyptian Conjurors by the name of Magi; and to refrain till he is better acquainted with history, to call such a man as Carlile ignorant.

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